



# NEWSLETTER

July 2020 Edition

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## Welcome to the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) July Newsletter!

With this edition we welcome many new readers – those who were on our *Mental Wellness during COVID-19* Newsletter distribution. We do not want to lose touch with the audience we built with that newsletter! So, we have made a couple of changes to our existing OCMH monthly newsletter to appeal to a wide audience. Again, welcome!

## Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) Updates

### OCMH Mental Health Clinician Listening Session

Interested in hearing mental health clinicians' perspectives on the most pressing clinical issues for Wisconsin's children, the Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) held a clinician listening session on June 24, 2020. Over 40 clinicians from across the state who actively work with children or supervise those that do participated and shared their perspectives.

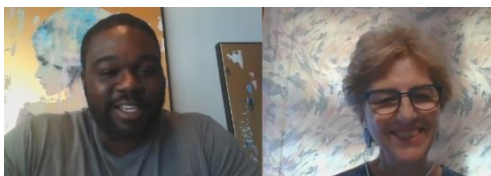


#### What clinicians said are the most important issues:

- Increase clinical training in evidence-based practices and support for what works: school-based mental health, active communities of practice that compensate for training gaps, wraparound, peer mentoring, and place-based services.
- Improve cultural responsiveness by hiring and retaining staff from diverse backgrounds and increasing clinicians' cultural awareness through educational activities and discussion of how systems play a role in clients' own experiences of race.
- Ongoing support for telehealth which has increased youth and family engagement in treatment.

**Youth Listening Session** With the success of the first Youth Listening Session on May 21, 2020 planning for a second session is underway.

## Collective Impact Partner Interview



Linda Hall, OCMH (right), interviews Dr. Brandon Currie, STRYV365 (left).

Dr. Brandon Currie, CEO of STRYV365 and Children's Mental Health Collective Impact Resiliency Team member, speaks on the intersection of race, trauma, and mental health offering insight on the key elements of achieving systems improvement. [Listen to the interview.](#)

## Children's Mental Health in Professional Literature

OCMH Research Analyst Melissa Murphy spotlights new, open access articles about children's mental health.



The COVID-19 Pandemic: a Call to Action to Identify and Address **Racial and Ethnic Disparities**. [Read the article](#).

Inequity and the **Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Communities of Color** in the United States: The Need for a Trauma-Informed Social Justice Response. [Read the article](#).

**Disparities in Behavioral Health Diagnoses**: Considering Racial and Ethnic Youth Groups. [Read the article](#).

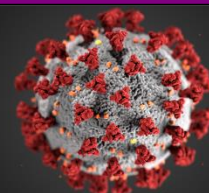
**Unconscious Bias** and the Diagnosis of Disruptive Behavior Disorders and ADHD in African American and Hispanic Youth. [Read the article](#).

*These and more articles are available on the [OCMH Website](#).*

## COVID-19

COVID-19 has created much change in our lives and world. For far too many it has resulted in job loss, changes to family routines, and increased anxiety.

**Wisconsin's 211** is a direct indicator of the increased needs COVID-19 has caused. According to Charlene Mouille, Executive Director – United Way Wisconsin, 211 saw an initial 300% increase in calls the first three weeks of COVID-19 beginning in mid-March. That has leveled off to a 150% increase in calls above pre-COVID-19 with spikes at certain points of the pandemic, for example when the Safer-at-Home order was reversed and when the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was announced. The top four topics for 211 calls have been: 1) COVID-19 information, 2) Housing, 3) Mental health/addictions, and 4) Food/meals.



**Get Help at 211**  
Ways to access:  
Call the 3-digit  
number 211  
or  
[Online](#)

## Legislative/Policy Update

- **CARES Act Provider Payment Program.** Since June 5<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Health Services (DHS) has been accepting applications from specific types of health care providers to receive pandemic relief funds. These funds are meant to offset losses and expenses incurred during March, April, and May 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds for these payments were provided to the state under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. A total of \$100 million is targeted for long-term care service providers and facilities, and emergency medical services. Another \$10 million is targeted for health clinics and centers serving the state's most underserved populations.
- **Telehealth.** Medicaid is very pleased with how well telehealth has been working during COVID, including audio-only telehealth which has been allowed under federal rules during the public health emergency. Wisconsin Medicaid is urging the federal Medicaid program to allow audio-only telehealth to continue after COVID. HIPAA-compliant video telehealth has become a permanent Medicaid-covered service. OCMH is interested in your experiences with mental health telehealth. Please forward stories and perspectives to [ocmh@wi.gov](mailto:ocmh@wi.gov).

- **Mental Health Day Treatment Services for Children (DHS 40).** This [revised rule](#) was published July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Community Substance Abuse Service Standards (DHS 75).** A draft revised rule will be released for public comment soon. The draft will include a single certification for outpatient mental health and substance abuse. For more information, visit the [DHS administrative rules page](#).
- **Mental Health Workforce.** The Legislative & Policy Committee of the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health has a subcommittee working on policy and application review issues related to the licensing of mental health professionals. A meeting with the Department of Safety and Professional Services to discuss several issues is in the planning stage.
- **Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving.** This task force which was created to support and strengthen the direct care workforce, increase access to care, and improve the quality of caregiving in Wisconsin is currently seeking feedback on draft policy proposals. The public [input survey](#) is due July 14<sup>th</sup>. For information on the task force view its [website](#).
- **Conversion Therapy Prohibition Bill (AB 111).** This bipartisan bill which would have prohibited certain mental health providers from engaging in conversion therapy with a minor died in committee along with other bills not taken up in this legislative session. Conversion therapy is any practice that seeks to change an individual's gender expression, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Several cities in Wisconsin have banned conversion therapy as have more than a dozen states.

## Of Interest

### July is BIPOC Mental Health Month

July has historically been the month where the unique struggles that underrepresented groups face regarding mental illness has been recognized, and it has been called Minority Mental Health Month. Mental Health America in its action toolkit is using the more current term, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). For more information and resources:

- Mental Health America – [BIPOC Mental Health Month](#)
- [US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health](#)



The mental health needs of this population are noteworthy:

- Racial and ethnic groups tend to experience a more severe and chronic life course of mental health disorders than non-Hispanic whites.
- There is a severe lack of diversity among mental health clinicians, with 90% identifying as non-Hispanic white. As a result, implicit bias may lead to inequities in diagnosis and treatment of minority youth.

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